



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY
EXPERIMENT STATION

MAFES DAWG TRACKS

Aerial lifts are vehicle-mounted work platforms used to elevate people for easier access to high job sites. While arguably safer than scaffolding, there are hazards related to aerials lifts, so heed a few essential safety precautions.

Know your lift – Be familiar with manufacturer guidelines and understand how all the controls operate and react. If you are renting a lift, ask the business you are renting it from to help you become familiar with that specific machine's functions. Take some time to become comfortable with the lift controls in an open, safe area before performing job task with it.

Inspect the lift & the surrounding work area prior to operation – Like any other equipment, check the lift's fluid levels, operating controls & safety features before use. But examining the work area is equally as important. Look for overhead hazards (ceiling heights, obstructions such as low light fixtures or beams, or electrical lines). Be aware of floor/ground the lift is on; look for unstable surfaces, slopes, bumps, holes, ditches, soft/muddy areas or debris. High winds and severe weather conditions are major hazards to watch out for that can tip over or otherwise endanger your employees.

Do not surpass reach and weight limits - Take the time to calculate weight before loading and operating your aerial lift. And remember to take into account the combined weight of the operator, tools, and materials. Also remember, the weight limits decrease as the height increases and as reach is extended.

For more info contact:
Leslie Woolington
MAFES/MSU-ES Risk Mgmt.
LHW4@msstate.edu
662.325.3204

Ensure the lift stays in place – Use outriggers and brakes for a layer of stability, even if the ground appears stable. Wheel chocks are also advised if working on an incline. Scissors lifts, because of their design, should not be moved while extended and should not be used with other equipment in the area (as a slight bump could cause them to tip).

Clear workers and pedestrians from the base and surrounding area of a boom lift - Clear the entire circumference of the lift's reach prior to starting any work and set up work zone warnings to warn others and to keep the area clear. Falling material or a dropped tool is a high safety risk for those below.

Use fall protection – If in a boom lift, it's best to use a fall restraint system (body belt or harness and short, non-shock absorbing lanyard). This system will keep the worker in the basket not exposed to a fall in the first place. Scissor lifts are different in that the rails around the platform area are sufficient fall protection if the user is completely enclosed. Meaning you must hook that chain or close that gate at the end of the platform. In both a boom lift and a scissor lift you must stay standing on the platform's floor. Never sit or climb on the rails.



Sources:

<https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/19314-using-aerial-lifts->
<https://www.bigrentz.com/blog/aerial-lift-safety>
<https://simplifiedsafety.com/blog/what-type-of-fall-protection-is-needed-to-operate-a-lift/>